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An expanded version of testimony given on March 21, 1964, before the Massachusetts State Advisory Commission to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is given. The effects of school segregation and desegregation upon both Negro and white children are discussed. The aims of education include the acquisition of academic skills, the development of a positive self-concept, and the creation of a strong motivation to learn. For each aim, the results of studies and programs are included. They show the differences between Negro and white children in typical segregated school settings and the degree to which racial balancing of Negro and white groups appears to correct or reduce the damage to both Negro and white children.

Segregated schools provide limited opportunity for children to develop to capacity; they are harmful to both Negro and white children. Racially balanced conditions are an effective force in correcting these damaging effects, for they provide an opportunity for association among diverse groups. A bibliography of references is included.

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curriculum development, experimental teaching techniques, supervision and evaluation of teaching and supervision in these schools, college credit for school personnel involved, and general ways in which colleges and universities could participate most constructively in this project.

"When the teaching staff, especially those with administrative authority, conclude that pupils cannot learn, the essential function of the school disappears. The schools then become holding operations devoted to custodial care, rather than educational institutions. . . . When schools become holding operations, teachers are evaluated more on their ability to control the class room than on their ability to impart knowledge to students."

Haryou, *Youth in the Ghetto*

3. Selection of the personnel to be involved in this project. The process of selecting the supervisory and teaching personnel to be involved in the project should begin within the present school year. The criteria for selection should be determined by the superintendent of schools in consultation with his advisors and the consultants or representatives from the associated colleges and universities.

4. Institute an important and visible aspect of the educational program as quickly as possible. Probably the transitional *Reading Mobilization Year* program could be put into operation by the beginning of the next school year (September, 1964).

5. Develop and publish a time schedule for the implementation of all other aspects of the overall program. Above all, this time schedule should be realistic, and should reflect the sense of urgency which the nature of this problem demands.

6. Put in motion an effective and responsible public relations program designed to acquaint the general public with the details of the program, obtain public support, and educate the community concerning the educational significance of this project.

"The apprenticeship program (in Phoenix, Arizona) has had few Negroes to participate in it. One program, in 1948-49, refused to accept a Negro applicant, though he had had the vocational training in high school. In 1959, this same person applied for membership in the union, but was told that he did not have apprenticeship program training, so his application was refused."

—Rev. G. Benjamin Brooks

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SOME EFFECTS OF SEGREGATION AND DESEGREGATION IN THE SCHOOLS

Gerald S. Lesser, Kristine M. Rosenthal, Sally E. Polkoff, and Marjorie B. Pfankuch

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Discussions of racial segregation in the schools often show a tendency to disintegrate into a series of destructive and vituperative attacks and counter-attacks. Frequently, this negative emphasis appears in the effort to identify school conditions which have the least harmful effects or contain the fewest damaging features. It is possible to place such discussions in a more positive, constructive framework by asking at the outset: What are the objectives we hope and expect schools to achieve with children?

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What are the goals which we set for our schools? It is only after the aims for children in school have been defined that it becomes meaningful to discuss matters pertaining to the failure of the segregated school to achieve these aims and the ability of the racially-balanced school to correct this failure.

There are differences of opinion about the proper role of the school in American society. Teachers may view these objectives somewhat differently from parents. Local school committees may define the goals of schools differently from other professional judgments. A manageable list of educational goals will certainly never be exhaustive, bu. there perhaps would be common agreement on these objectives.

I. To teach the child certain necessary *academic achievements,* such as reading, writing, and the ability to think logically.

II. To help the child develop a realistic and constructive image of himself, a *self-concept* which allows him to regard himself as a capable, contributing member of society.

III. To instill the desire or *motivation to learn.*

For each of these educational goals, two kinds of evidence will be presented:

1. Information regarding the differences between Negro and white children in typical segregated school settings.

2. Evidence on the degree to which racial balancing of Negro and white groups appears to correct or reduce the damage to both Negro and white children.

To summarize the observations in advance of giving the available research information, we shall state first, that (in several areas of development) school segregation produces harm to both Negro and white children, and, second, that racially-balanced conditions are an effective force in correcting these damaging effects.

I. *Academic Achievement*

In the area of academic achievement, there are several studies which reflect upon both the efforts of segregation and racial balance in the schools. The first of these is a study which the senior author and colleagues conducted with young children in New York City during the past five years. Tests were used to assess different aspects of mental ability in children: The child's reasoning ability, his vocabulary and use of words, as well as his ability to deal with numbers and solve problems requiring spatial conceptualization. Evidence indicates that these are the major abilities which allow prediction of the child's performance in school. Each of 400 children were examined by a trained psychologist for a 3-4 hour period. This study indicates that the child's mental abilities are influenced strongly by his cultural surroundings.

Children were studied from Negro, Puerto Rican, Chinese, and Jewish families in New York City. Each group included children both from racially-imbalanced and relatively balanced schools. This is the first finding: For every one of the four abilities measured—verbal ability, reasoning, numerical ability, and space conceptualization—the children from the more integrated schools and neighborhoods showed significantly superior performance when compared to the children from racially-imbalanced schools and neighborhoods.

Another finding from this study may be described as a "convergence" effect. In the more racially-balanced schools, the children from the various ethnic groups show quite similar scores—displaying levels of ability more similar to each other. In contrast, in the racially-imbalanced schools, average test scores for each ethnic group remain markedly different. For example, the abilities of the Negro children in racially-balanced neighborhoods are comparable to those of other children, whereas in racially-imbalanced communities, the test scores of Negro children remain

markedly different from other ethnic groups.

It is clear that these results cannot unequivocally be attributed to the effects of segregation alone. Other variables, such as social class, are confounded with the degree of racial imbalance. Nevertheless, the conclusion from this research is apparent:

When children attend racially-imbalanced schools, their measured mental abilities are significantly inferior to the abilities of children who attend racially-balanced schools.

Another study (Hansen, 1960) indicates the effects of segregation and desegregation upon the academic achievement of white as well as Negro children. This report from Washington, D.C. includes the following findings:

1. Before the schools in that city were integrated in 1954, the Negro children were inferior in academic achievement to the white children.

2 Integration has been followed by steady and significant gains among both Negro and white children in several different areas of achievement; both Negro and white pupils in Washington schools performed better on objectively-measured achievement following desegregation.

Another study which charts the changes in academic performance of both Negro and white children when previously segregated schools become racially balanced was conducted in Louisville (Stallings, 1960). Achievement tests were given to pupils in the second, sixth, and eighth grades for the year prior to desegregation, the year following desegregation, and after the third year of desegregation.

Despite the fact that desegregation of the schools proceeded very rapidly in Louisville, this study concludes that academic standards were maintained; indeed, substantial gains were shown in scholastic achievement, with both Negro and white children making these gains.

Many other studies (e.g., Ferrel, 1959; Public Education Association, 1955; Wolff, 1962, 1963) supply evidence that segregated schools function on lower levels of academic achievement than do other schools in the same educational systems. This inferiority of academic performance in racially-imbalanced schools becomes greater as the children progress through the school grades. Deutsch (1960), for example, reports that it is at the first-grade level that the smallest differences between racial groups are observed, and that these differences in academic functioning become more marked in the later grades. By the time children in racially-imbalanced schools reach the upper grades, they are academically far behind.

The conclusions from these studies conducted in several different cities with several different age groups are clear:

1. Under segregated school conditions, Negro children are uniformly inferior in academic achievement to white children.

2. The racial balancing of the schools contributes greatly to improving academic achievement of Negro children and, usually, of white children as well.

II. *Self-concept*

In addition to these observations regarding academic achievement, we shall consider the Negro child's image of himself as a learner, his self-picture or self-concept as it develops under racially-imbalanced and balanced conditions. The self-concept of the segregated Negro child differs in several ways from the self-concepts held by other children. The Negro child perceives himself as inferior to others; his self-concept also is less realistic and more confused. In many instances, the perceived antagonism toward Negroes is converted into feelings of self-hatred (e.g., Landreth and Johnson, 1953; Trent, 1957).

In order to understand the segregated Negro child's self-concept, it is important to discuss the development of the self-concept of any child, Negro or white. The goals that a child sets

for himself, the goals he thinks he can achieve (if he really tries), are affected heavily by the expectations that other people have of him. The educational system--mainly through its teachers—provides the child directly with a sense of what society expects of him. Because it is often a very discouraging job to teach children in segregated schools, a common reaction of teachers in these schools —no matter how well-intentioned they may be—is to reduce their expectations and academic demands upon these children.

Illustrating this is a study (Gottlieb, 1963) in which white teachers of Negro children most often chose the following five categories in describing these children: talkative, lazy, fun-loving, high-strung, and rebellious.

These white teachers of segregated Negro children generally avoided mentioning those qualities which they would consider desirable in the formal classroom setting. They were critical and pessimistic in their prognosis of the academic success of their Negro children. One may argue that these negative appraisals of the Negro child by white teachers only reflect reality but—whether or not these teacher perceptions are realistic--the outcome is the same: The Negro child, reflecting the teacher's attitude and those of his society, is likely to perceive himself as unworthy and inept.

When the Negro child notices that not much academic achievement is expected of segregated Negroes, he will come to expect or demand very little of himself. The conditions surrounding the Negro in the racially-imbalanced areas and in segregated schools do not encourage academic effort, striving, and vigorous performance; nor do they promote the image in a Negro child's mind that he can ever be a capable, contributing member of American society.

In contrast to the white child or to the Negro child educated in a desegregated setting, the Negro child from a segregated background does not know how to interpret the school situation. He cannot quite understand what the objectives of learning and teaching are, what reactions and responses are expected of him, and what the types of rewards for learning which exist in the typical school can possibly mean. His confidence in himself as a learner is stunted, and he cannot regard school as a place which has any ultimate meaning for his real life outside of school.

The messages communicated to Negro children by our society create not only feelings of inferiority but produce a confused and unrealistic self-image as well. These messages are sharply contradictory. On the one hand, Negro children are told that everyone in America with ambition and effort can be successful; those who fail do so because they do not work hard enough to succeed. Yet segregated Negro children, when they are ambititious, are made to feel that they are resented for being pushy and not keeping in their place.

And then again, if they follow the "know your place" message, they may be more subtly told that this apparent shiftlessness and lack of ambition is final proof of their innate racial inferiority. For the segregated Negro child, it is extremely confusing to try to discover who he is and what society expects of him. The Negro child has little opportunity to measure his own personal worth against the members of other groups. While we cannot wish to deny the Negro child his identity as a Negro, he must also feel that, as a Negro, he has a place in the society beyond his immediate community. The school must contribute to this feeling. By restricting the contact between Negro and white children, the segregated school prevents the Negro child from measuring himself against the children from other groups.

Thus far we have discussed the effects of segregated schools upon the self-concept of Negro children. What of the self-concept of white children? What do they gain or lose by attending schools with Negro children? If we are dedicated to an integrated society, they have much to gain. A segregated school leaves everyone

undereducated with respect to living in a multi-racial world. Existing prejudices become reinforced in segregated schools. Lacking a diversity of children against whom he can compare himself, the white child, too, develops an unrealistic concept of himself and others .

But it is the destructive effect upon upon the self-concept of the Negro child which is the more tragic. The stark fact of school segregation instructs the Negro that he is devalued by American society, that he is deemed worthy only of education in schools where other children like himself predominate. The very existence of these segregated schools—no matter what their educational quality—communicates to the Negro child that he is unfit and inferior.

The damaged self-perception is reflected in the Negro child's limited occupational and educational aspirations and plans (e.g., Holloway and Berreman, 1959; Rosen 1959; Stephensen, 1957). One recent study, however failed to confirm this finding (Gist and Bennett, 1963). The strong aspiration for geographic mobility of Negro adolescents (Gist and Bennett, 1963) is a possible additional expression of the confused self-picture of the Negro child in his normal environment. Other studies (e.g., Radke and Trager, 1950; Stevenson and Stewart, 1958) provide evidence of self-devaluation in the low proportion of Negro children who prefer other Negro children to white children as playmates, companions, and guests.

There is no guarantee, of course, that balanced schools will not also teach Negroes the same destructive lesson.

The point is, however, that the unbalanced school situation is structurally self-defeating; even the most dedicated teachers will encounter severe difficulties in attempting to overcome its effects. The balanced school at least has the opportunity to counteract in part the conflicting and confusing communications of the larger community to the Negro child, to offer him an opportunity to develop a more positive, realistic, and less confused image of himself.

What happens to the self-concepts of Negro and white children when segregated schools desegregate? Unfortunately, studies have not traced changes in self-concept in Negro and white children when segregated schools become progressively more racially-balanced. Certain parallels can be drawn, however, between the process of school desegregation and results derived from attempts (e.g., Campbell, Yarrow, and Radke, 1958; Mussen, 1950) to study out-of-school desegregated groups. In a study (Campbell, Yarrow, and Radke, 1958) of a newly-integrated summer camp, Negro children were found to underchoose children of their own race, preferring the whites, while the white children over-choose members of their own race. By the end of the camp session, a more balanced situation was achieved; the Negro children chose more Negro friends and the white children, too, where more likely to mention the desire to be friends with a Negro child. It seems, then, that initially the Negro was devalued by members of both races while a more realistic evaluation began to operate after the children had some exposure to each other and participated in the same activities.

III. *Motivation to Learn*

The child needs a knowledge of society's values and a realistic knowledge of himself and his potential contribution to society. In addition, he must be motivated to learn how to make this contribution. He must develop both the willingness and the ability to become a contributing member of society. What happens to the child's motivation to learn under segregated and desegregated conditions? One of the studies on this issue (Deutsch, 1960) reports that in segregated schools the Negro children abandoned a problem posed by the teacher as soon as any difficulty was encountered in attempting to solve it. When questioned for an explanation, the children typically responded "Who cares?" or "What does it matter?"

There is much additional evidence (e.g., Gottlieb, 1963, Gottlieb and TenHouten, 1963; Lott and Lott, 1963; Mussen, 1953; Riessman, 1962; Rosen, 1959) that segregated conditions weaken the motivation to learn. In a study (Rosen,1959) comparing the achievement motivation of Negro boys with the motivation to learn of white Protestant, Greek, Jewish, Italian, and French-Canadian boys of the same age, the achievement strivings of the Negro boys were significantly below other groups. This deficiency in motivation to learn found among the Negro boys may be related to their failure to see any relationship among the immediate classroom situation, their lives outside of school, and their expectations regarding their futures.

Also closely related to this lack of motivation is the fact that the rewards for learning offered by our schools and society are not as meaningful for the segregated Negro child as for other children. Typically, the segregated Negro child does not arrive at school equipped with the crucial ideas about the importance of knowledge for its own sake and its value in self-realization. The verbal rewards provided by the teacher which are effective in motivating middle-class white children bear little relationship to the segregated child's life outside of school and consequently have little impact upon him.

How does school desegregation help to stregthen the motivation to learn? Balanced schools are, first of all, capable of offering the Negro child a greater range of rewards than those available in segregated schools.

They have both broader and more effective resources available to arouse interest and aspiration. Secondly, racially-balanced schools provide the Negro child with an opportunity to see other children responding with excitement and effort to the challenges presented at school. The Negro child in a racially-balanced school perceives the effects upon other children of the rewards for learning, begins to value similar rewards, and aspire to them (e.g., Boyd, 1952).

We have referred throughout this review to changes in children when previously segregated schools become more racially-balanced. There is, however, a great difference between a racially-balanced school and a school which has developed truly integrated conditions. For a research review, the primary implications of a distinction between mere racial balance and integration is this: If the effects of change from segregation to racially-balanced conditions are clearly discernible, how much greater would these gains be if changes could be observed from segregated to truly integrated conditions? Studies of authentically integrated schools do not exist, but it is reasonable to expect that the positive results obtained for racially-balanced schools would be even more pronounced for basically integrated schools.

Summary

We have discussed the effects of school segregation and desegregation upon both Negro and white children as related to different aims of education: the acquistion of academic skills, the development of a positive self-concept, and the creation of a strong motivation to learn. Although these issues are complex, a relatively direct conclusion summarizes much of the evidence. Segregated schools provide limited opportunities for children to develop to capacity. Racial balancing, on the other hand, by providing an opportunity for association among diverse groups, serves to impart this important lesson—race is no index of human worth.

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